
AMT Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Guide

Introduction

AMT has the vision to ensure that Australians have access to safe, ethical and evidence-informed massage therapy treatment within the Australian health care system.

AMT places great value on members providing a *best practice* approach to their client's therapy, and to active participation in the health industry. In line with this, AMT promotes a culture of members fulfilling meaningful professional development and endeavours to share various opportunities to members to achieve this.

During 2020, AMT will be transitioning to a reflection-based model of professional development.

Background to the changes

Since its inception in 1993, AMT's Continuing Education Unit scheme was based on members gaining at least 100 Continuing Education Units (CEU) points per year. This model places strong value on points and cost of the experience, whereas the new model will focus on effort and reflective practices.

The move to revise the existing CEU system to a **reflective hours-based** model aims to:

- simplify the professional development process for members
- embrace personalised education experiences using reflective methods
- expand the current parameters of self-development for massage therapists, connecting, engaging and collaborating with colleagues and community
- broaden engagement with activities and opportunities in the public health sphere
- align with AMT's core values.

Annual Professional Development

Each of our 3200+ members has individual interests, specialisations and/or areas of improvement that they have identified. AMT appreciates this diversity within the member base and understands there are differences in what constitutes valuable development for individual members. However, AMT does not recognise particular content that is not in line with AMT's values. This includes training that is not within the scope of practice of massage therapy as outlined in the AMT Code of Practice.

<http://www.amt.org.au/downloads/practice-resources/AMT-code-of-practice-final.pdf#page=12>

Introduction (cont...)

AMT will continue to regularly share a range of development activities with members to assist in identifying relevant and accessible opportunities across Australia. Members can also choose other relevant activities, based on individual needs in both their practice and their community, providing that they align with the AMT Code of Practice.

Members are required to undertake twenty (20) hours of professional development each calendar year. Time taken to complete an activity will be recorded in 15-minute increments and cannot be carried over to the following year.

Each member will be in the driver's seat in terms of planning ongoing development, thinking about ongoing development and recording reflections in the AMT

member portal.

Members will complete a **Reflection Record** for each activity undertaken, detailing their personal experiences from the activity. To support members through this new process, a [Sample Reflection Record](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) have been included in this guide.

Professional Development Requirements

- Practitioner members of AMT will participate in at least **20 hours** of continuing professional development (CPD) per year.
- One hour of active learning will equal one hour of CPD.
- The CPD must be relevant to the massage therapy scope of practice.
- Documentation of self-directed CPD must include dates, a brief description of the outcomes, and the amount of time spent in each activity. These details must be entered into the **Reflection Record** in your personal membership portal in the AMT database.
- Members must retain written documentation of CPD (certificates of attendance, copies of articles, books, hyperlinks to content viewed online) that demonstrates completion of at least 20 hours of CPD per year. This documentation can be uploaded into the **Reflection Record** in your personal membership portal.
- Participation in mandatory skills acquisition (e.g. First Aid) may be counted as CPD.
- The AMT Board's role includes monitoring the competence of member massage therapists. The Board will conduct regular audits of AMT members' reflection records to ensure compliance with AMT continual professional development standards. This will include reviewing supporting evidence, such as certificates of attendance.

The Reflection Record

The reflection record includes five questions that are designed to help guide or frame member reflections. Members will be able to log into their AMT membership portal at any time to record reflections in relation to a professional development activity.

The questions that make up the reflection record are:

1. What happened? Briefly outline what the professional development (PD) activity was about.

Tell us about the format of the activity and provide a broad outline of the topics covered. Some examples of formats include a face-to-face workshop or conference you attended; an online course; a podcast you listened to, a research paper you read; an in-house training or networking session you attended.

2. How well did the PD activity align with what you wanted/expected?

Tell us about your experience in relation to your professional development goals. Both positive and negative experiences are valid here: often a disappointing experience can help you to redefine or hone further goals and interests. Your responses here may also help AMT to identify professional development opportunities to recommend to other members or flag issues of concern around a particular training.

Further questions you might consider when responding to this question:

What are your thoughts and feelings about the value of the activity for you?

Why did you undertake the activity? What did you hope to achieve?

Did it motivate you? Inspire you?

Did it test or challenge you?

Did it make you rethink your professional development goals?

Did it annoy you or fall short of your expectations?

Was there any issue with the quality of the training/activity that impacted on your expectations?

The Reflection Record (cont...)

3. How will this PD activity influence your clinical practice?

Sometimes, professional development not only helps us incorporate new ideas, techniques and knowledge into our practice but it can also help us to clarify what we don't want to do or further pursue, which is also valid!

Some further questions you might consider when responding to this question:

What outcomes and new ideas will you try to implement?

What changes in your practice could others expect to see?

Is this an area you are interested in gaining further knowledge and skills?

Is there something you were routinely doing in practice that you will no longer do?

4. What further professional development will help you explore the learning/ideas taken from this PD activity?

Tell us about what you think you'll do next. It might involve extending the new skills and knowledge that you gained or it might involve taking a new direction.

Some further questions you might consider when responding to this question:

Can you confidently apply these new skills and knowledge?

What other professional development activities will help you consolidate and apply this learning?

Are there any barriers to sourcing or accessing further appropriate training?

The Reflection Record (cont...)

5. What have you learned about yourself: your skills, attitudes, values and beliefs?

We're interested in your evaluation of how your personal attributes influence and inform your learning experiences and, in turn, your clinical practice.

Some further questions you might consider when responding to this question:

Has the activity highlighted a gap in your skills or perhaps a strength that you hadn't previously acknowledged?

Do you find it difficult to incorporate new learning that may conflict with how you were previously practising or thinking?

Do you tend to play it safe with your professional development choices and stick with familiar subjects?

Reflection Record example 1

1. What happened? Briefly outline what the professional development (PD) activity was about.

The activity was a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) run by University of Tasmania on Understanding Multiple Sclerosis. It's aimed at a broad audience that includes health care practitioners like massage therapists.

Much of the presentation material was via videos.

The course was divided into six, weekly modules covering the following broad topics:

1. Biology and neuroanatomy review
2. Diagnosis and symptoms (including some patient insights and perspectives)
3. Demographics and some concepts around risk
4. Risk factors for MS
5. Management and support strategies
6. Living with MS

2. How well did the PD activity align with what you wanted/expected?

I really enjoyed completing this activity. Having completed another MOOC through Uni of Tasmania, I was pretty familiar with the format so it met my expectations. I also value having the freedom to complete the modules at my own pace and at a time that was convenient for me.

I enjoy gaining a deeper understanding of specific conditions and feel it will assist me to better meet the needs of clients who present in the clinic with multiple sclerosis.

I always enjoy anatomy review as well, so the first module was a good refresher of basic neuroanatomy.

Reflection Record example 1 (cont...)

3. How will this PD activity influence your clinical practice?

Listening to the patient perspectives within the MOOC helped to build my empathy and understanding, which is something that I find can easily wax and wane with the day-to-day demands of being in practice. When you're tired and seeing lots of clients, it can be difficult to notice when you may be experiencing compassion fatigue.

One of the strong themes that emerged in this training is that MS is a very individual condition. Hearing patients talk about this aspect of MS (particularly its unpredictability) was a reminder not to make any assumptions about how a client is experiencing or managing a condition, regardless of the presentation. I will try to make sure I am always ready to listen and meet the client where they are at, rather than making assumptions based on past experiences and even past successes.

The medical detail/biology/anatomy that I learned probably will have less bearing on how I practise than the insights from patients. I find it interesting that the "technical" info is effectively secondary to the human perspectives in terms of influencing how I will apply the knowledge.

Reflection Record example 1 (cont...)

4. What further professional development will help you explore the learning/ideas taken from this PD activity?

Having now completed two of these MOOCs through University of Tasmania about specific conditions (Dementia and Multiple Sclerosis) I am really interested in completing more professional development about conditions that may present in the clinic environment beyond the standard MSK presentations. I feel this will help to build my confidence around working in a more interdisciplinary fashion with other health practitioners.

I am also interested in doing some independent research and sourcing case studies of massage therapists who have worked with multiple sclerosis to get a better sense of how massage therapy may be applied to someone living with MS.

5. What have you learned about yourself: your skills, attitudes, values and beliefs?

I don't think this activity challenged my values, attitudes or beliefs but it definitely reminded me that being a good listener is one of the fundamental attributes of a therapist. I think it is probably easy for me to forget that, both personally and professionally.

It also taught me that no matter how skilled you think you might be in a particular thing (say, empathy), there is always space for further reflection and development.

I also realise that I have reached my "modality ceiling". I am no longer very interested in learning techniques or modalities but, rather, principles - how I can best apply and adapt my knowledge responsively to the client in front of me.

Reflection Record example 2

1. What happened? Briefly outline what the professional development (PD) activity was about.

- watched the footage of Ian Harris' lecture at the AMT 2018 conference on youtube
- he talked about how he became a sceptic/scientist, some basic concepts to do with experiments and clinical trials, the fact that many surgeries are untested and when they are tested it turns out they are no better than placebo.

2. How well did the PD activity align with what you wanted/expected?

- Honestly didn't know what I was in for but heard from a colleague that the lecture was great and worth watching. It was a total treat. Probably exceeded my expectations cause I wasn't bored for a single minute.
- loved the convenience of being able to watch this amazing material at home. Watched after dinner with a glass of wine!

3. How will this PD activity influence your clinical practice?

- Info about lack of evidence for many surgeries = mind blown 🤯
- Influence on practice? ... will help with some tricky convos maybe? But really appreciate the advice Ian gave at the end about getting second opinions on big procedures. I feel like this will help me to provide better guidance to clients who might be considering a surgery. For that matter, any intervention or treatment that there may be some uncertainty about.
- Will definitely be suggesting more often that clients seek a second opinion

Reflection Record example 2 (cont...)

4. What further professional development will help you explore the learning/ideas taken from this PD activity?

- Never been a fan of research but this has turned me around a bit. Enjoyed Ians conversational style.
- I am not entirely sure were to start though. Might ask AMT if there is any similar content available on youtube

5. What have you learned about yourself: your skills, attitudes, values and beliefs?

- Professional development goes well with a glass of wine after dinner!
- Maybe I am too quick to jump to conclusions about what is boring (e.g. I thought that research is boring and not relevant to me)
- Listening to stuff about evidence and clinical trials is not actually “meh”.
- I probably need to develop my skills and understanding a bit more in this area. I can see how this would really help the way I communicate with clients.

FAQs

When do I need to start accumulating my 20 hours of CPD?

AMT gives you one year from when you join or renew your membership to accumulate your 20 CPD hours. For example, if you joined AMT in January 2020, your 20 hours will be due by the end of January 2021.

I have already accumulated all these CEU points in my current membership year. Am I just going to lose those?

The new CPD scheme is being rolled out gradually throughout 2020. Your current CEU points will remain valid until you renew your membership, then you will be transitioned into the new system. For example, if your renewal falls due in July 2020, you will be transitioned into the new system then and your 20 CPD hours will be due by the end of July 2021.

What kinds of activities can I undertake as part of my professional development?

You can undertake a broad range of activities, as long as they are relevant to massage therapy and within the scope of practice as outlined in the AMT Code of Practice: workshops, conferences, local meetings, networking

sessions with other massage therapists/health professionals, mentoring, reading research articles, writing a blog post, listening to podcasts, reading books.

Are the AMT conference and other AMT events like local meetings still acknowledged for professional development?

Yes they are! But it is your responsibility to enter a personal reflection in your member portal that documents the activity to have the hours of attendance recognised as part of your annual professional development.

I spent 10 minutes reading an interesting blog post the other day. Does that count as professional development?

If the blog post made you reflect on an element of your clinical practice and you write about it in your reflection record, that counts as professional development. You must include a hyperlink to the blog post in the dedicated space in your membership portal. The system records activities in increments of 15 minutes. Completing the reflection record can be included in the CPD hours.

For example, if an activity took 20 minutes to take part in and you spent 10 minutes reflecting and writing, that counts as 30 minutes of CPD.

I am not a good writer. How do you expect me to write a reflection?

The reflection model is not set up to test your grammar or your powers of expression. Bullet points and notes are fine. Think of it as something like writing a diary rather than writing an essay – there is no right or wrong answer and no grades.

How and when do I advise AMT of my professional development?

You can enter a reflection record at any point during your membership year via your membership portal at members.amt.org.au. Hours will be allocated at the time of submission. If you do not upload documentation as you go, you will need to retain it in the event of an audit.

I find it really hard to source good professional development. Will you provide some guidance?

Yes, we will still be publishing our suggested PD activities and posting things as we find them within AMT's Facebook group. And the reflection records submitted by members might also help us to identify other good opportunities that we can share.

FAQs (cont...)

I cannot possibly do any continuing education; I've been too busy with other things...

It is possible you may have done something that is actually a relevant activity without even realising. Perhaps you listened to a radio interview on a health-related topic that may have got you thinking about an aspect of your clinical practice. Maybe you watched a documentary about a particular health condition and learned something new.

However, if you haven't done any professional development at all you can become a non-CPD member. This enables you to retain your current level of membership but AMT will not endorse you as a health fund provider or refer members of the public to you.

Please note: if you hold grandfathered qualifications, you will need to maintain your professional development to remain compliant as a health fund provider.

Sometimes I lose track of time and don't think about professional development. Will you help me keep on track?

We will continue to send a mid membership year reminder to you regarding your required professional development hours. However, it is ultimately your responsibility to monitor how many hours you have completed.

I am undertaking online learning. The course organiser said the activity would take 3 hours but it took me 5 hours. How do I provide evidence of the actual time I spent completing the activity?

Most online courses give estimates of time investment within a range, to account for individual differences. AMT won't be asking you to produce evidence of time taken but we do expect that the time claimed is a truthful representation.

I find it a bit tricky to keep track of the total hours I've completed for my PD. Will my total Professional Development hours be included in the membership portal or will I need to add them up myself?

The system will calculate hours for you so there's no need to do any complicated maths! Once you reach 20 hours, you will be deemed CPD compliant for that membership year. However, you are welcome to keep recording extra activities you have undertaken so that you have a complete archive of your professional development.

I've seen an interesting professional development activity I'd like to undertake but I'm not sure whether I'll get professional development hours from AMT. How do I find out?

Please email or phone AMT Head Office and we will be more than happy to advise you.

I completed an activity for professional development but I didn't really get anything out of it. What happens if my reflection record is negative? Will I still earn credit for the activity?

Yes, you will. Not all professional development experiences are going to be fabulous but even the not-so-great experiences can help you to clarify your priorities and interests, or develop new learning goals.

How many points will I receive for doing my first aid recertification?

We won't be awarding points any more under this system. You will be able to claim some hours every 3 years for your recertification but you will still have to submit a very brief reflection to claim the hours.



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